

REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, Applicants respectfully request entry and consideration of this after-final Amendment because the proposed claim amendments were suggested by the Examiner in paragraph 10 of the final Office Action.

As an additional preliminary matter, Applicants request consideration of the Information Disclosure Statement filed June 11, 2010.

Claims 9 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite, and also under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Specifically, the Examiner objects to the use of the term “substantially” in claims 9 and 10, asserting that renders the claims indefinite and that there is no support for this term in the Specification. In response, Applicants have amended claims 9 and 10 to remove the term “substantially.” Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections of claims 9 and 10 is respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 4, 9, and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent Application 11-099564 (hereinafter, “JP ‘564”) in view of Suda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,613,177). Applicants traverse this rejection because the cited references, taken alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest that the strip pieces of the outer belt layer are arranged such that there is no overlap between adjacent strip pieces, as now recited in independent claims 2 and 4.

JP ‘564 discloses a tire including two belt layers, each formed from an integer number of strip pieces (see Abstract). However, while JP ‘564 discloses that each belt layer

is constructed from an integer number of strip pieces, the reference fails to disclose that the inner and outer belt layer are made up of the same number of strip pieces. Moreover, the reference fails to disclose or suggest that strip pieces of the outer belt layer are separated from one another by a uniform gap, such that there is no overlap between adjacent strip pieces.

Suda teaches that a tire includes a single belt layer made from a plurality of strips having a predetermined width. As shown in FIG. 4 of Suda, each strip 1 has a strip body 1a and margin rubber 1b (col. 5, lines 63-65). To form a belt layer, the strips of Suda are aligned so that they overlap by a small amount. Specifically, as shown in FIGs. 7-9 of Suda, each of the strip pieces overlaps an adjacent strip piece by covering up at least a portion of the margin rubber.

In contrast, claims 2 and 4 have been amended, as suggested by the Examiner in paragraph 10 of the final Office Action, to clarify that strip pieces in an outer belt layer are positioned with spaces in between adjacent strip pieces, such that there is no overlap between adjacent outer belt layer strip pieces. Since JP '564 and Suda, taken alone or in combination, fail to disclose this feature, withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection of independent claims 2 and 4 and their respective dependent claims 9 and 10 is respectfully requested.

Finally, withdrawn claims 1 and 3 have been amended as suggested by the Examiner in paragraph 10 of the final Office Action to recite that there is no overlap between adjacent strip pieces in a belt layer. Based on these amendments, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner consider rejoinder of claims 1 and 3.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants believe that this case is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner should call Applicants' attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge fees which may be required to this application under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 07-2069.

Respectfully submitted,

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